

# **INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (IAC)**

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# INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES (IAC)

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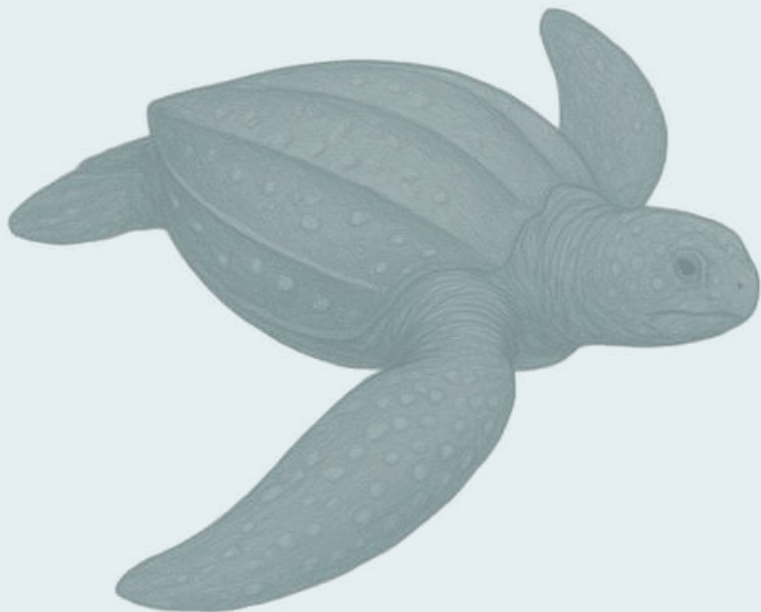
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## Presentation by the IAC Secretariat at the 3rd Meeting of the IATTC Working Group on Ecosystems and Bycatch

May 26-27, 2025

The IAC Secretariat presented the progress on the preparation of the Manual for the Handling and Release of Sea Turtles Incidentally Caught in Fishing Operations that is being developed by the IAC Scientific Committee's Fisheries Working Group in conjunction with the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS). Once the IAC manual is finalized it will be shared with the IATTC to inform their process of preparing best practice guidelines for IATTC fisheries.

## Pilot Project Working Group Meeting

### Chile-Peru

May 19, 2025



Chile



Peru

Working Group Coordinator Paula Salinas, Chile's delegate to the IAC Consultative Committee, presented Chile's progress in developing a budget for the project and the efforts made with government entities in Chile to support the workshops in two ports. The IAC Secretary and the other WG member Javier Quiñonez, delegate of IMARPE (Peru) to the IAC, participated in the virtual meeting held on May 19.





## Meeting of the Working Group Fibropapilloma

May 22,  
2025

The Fibropapilloma Working Group of the IAC Scientific Committee held its first meeting on May 22, 2025 with the objective of planning the preparation of a technical document on Fibropapilloma disease, its causes, symptoms, range of distribution in the 16 IAC countries. Existing treatments, knowledge and research, practical management advice for individuals that can be used in the field and recommendations for decision makers. The WG meeting agreed on a literature review of scientific information, including prevalence data, treatments and recommendations for different audiences including decision makers and sea turtle projects working in the field. The WG agreed on the topics to be included in the document and activities in its work plan: the creation of a questionnaire to be shared with the Scientific and Consultative Committee delegates from the 16 IAC countries, the literature review and the preparation of the preliminary technical document to be presented to the Scientific Committee meeting at the end of 2025.





The WG was formed at the request of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the 11th Conference of the Parties of the IAC. The WG is made up of: Julia Horrocks (Caribbean Netherlands), Kaj Schut (Caribbean Netherlands), Eduardo Espinoza (Ecuador), Erik Santos (Brazil), Javier Quiñonez (Peru), Jennifer Chauca (Peru), Marino Abrego (Panama), Paula Salinas (Chile), and Virginia Ferrando Karumbe (Coordinator representing Uruguay).

## National Strategy for Cleanup and Conservation of beaches and coasts

June 05, 2025

By: Dirección General de Conservación y Gestión e Mares y Costas de la Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (General Directorate of Conservation and Management of Seas and Coasts of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources)



On World Environment Day, President Claudia Sheinbaum launched the National Strategy for the Cleanup and Conservation of Beaches and Coasts 2025-2030 in several coastal states of Mexico. This initiative seeks to protect marine ecosystems, especially sea turtles. The strategy responds to the alarming presence of plastics (60-90% of waste on beaches), which threaten turtles in all their life stages. It proposes to eliminate 100% of plastic waste on Mexican beaches by 2030, with advances of 10% to 30% between 2025 and 2026, creating safe corridors for the nesting and survival of these animals. In addition to coastal cleanup, the strategy includes the elimination of ghost nets and other marine debris, promoting an integrated approach that connects coastal and ocean habitat conservation. This campaign is key to ensuring the resilience of sea turtle populations and preserving their ecological role.





# Commemorative Coin to the Hawksbill Turtle of the Central Bank of Costa Rica

May 26, 2025



The Central Bank of Costa Rica launched on May 26, 2025 a new collectible coin of ₡ 50, dedicated to the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), as part of its series "Fauna of the ecosystems of Costa Rica". The coin is available in two presentations: acrylic and case, both priced at ₡ 8,650. The design includes the text "Coral Reef" and an image of the turtle on a map of the reef. Sales are limited to two units per person. This initiative seeks to promote awareness on the conservation of emblematic marine species of the country.

<https://www.nacion.com/economia/nueva-monedas-coleccionable-de-50-se-vendera-la/J2FA4PJ53VDMHNYREJ6UUP534M/story/>





## 18th Meeting of the IAC Consultative Committee of Experts of the IAC

May 29 - 30, 2025

The 18th Meeting of the CIT Advisory Committee of Experts (CCE-18) was held via videoconference on May 29-30, 2025, and was chaired by Dr. José Eduardo Ponce. The meeting was attended by delegates from the 16 IAC member countries, sectoral members, and observers accredited to the IAC. The Advisory Committee reached the following agreements and recommendations: 1. The proposal presented by the CIT Strategic Partnerships Working Group for a Technical Document on Electronic Monitoring Systems and their Importance in Sea Turtle Conservation was adopted. This will be reviewed by the Scientific Committee for final adoption.

2. The terms of reference and work plan of the Atlantic Leatherback Working Group were adopted. 3. The terms of reference of the Advisory Committee were adopted, with the inclusion of a mechanism for selecting the sectoral representatives of the Committee. This will be presented to the 12th Conference of the Parties for consideration. 4. The election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee was held with the following results:

Chair - Mr. Santos Roberto Hernández, Delegate of Mexico to the Advisory Committee. Vice-Chair - Ms. Airam López Roulet, Delegate of Guatemala to the Advisory Committee.





The IAC Secretariat's participation supports the implementation of the letter of intent between the IAC and SPAW signed in July 2024 with the objective of aligning efforts and avoiding duplication. The IAC Scientific Committee also has a Sargasso Working Group, and this workshop facilitates further cooperation between regional and international partners, ensuring coherent policy development and technical collaboration. The action plan finalized at the meeting will contribute to more effective mitigation strategies, supporting the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems throughout the Wider Caribbean Region. The Consultative Committee of Experts and the Secretariat are grateful for the support, commitment and leadership demonstrated during 6 years of management by the outgoing Chair and Vice-Chair Mr. Eduardo Ponce and Mr. Eduardo Espinoza.







# Jorge, the sea turtle, swims free after 41 years in captivity

By: Dr. Laura Prodoscimi, Argentine Delegate to the IAC Scientific Committee



Argentina

Jorge, a 60-year-old loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), was released into the Atlantic Ocean on April 11, 2025, after spending more than four decades in captivity in Mendoza, Argentina.



Jorge's journey began in 1984, when he was rescued from fishing nets near Bahía Blanca. For years, he lived in a shallow tank, 500 KMs away from the sea. But thanks to a three-year rehabilitation effort led by Argentine scientists, Jorge relearned to swim, hunt and navigate the ocean currents. Now, equipped with a satellite tracker, Jorge is on his way to *Praia do Forte*, Brazil, his probable birthplace, according to genetic analysis.



Researchers are monitoring its progress, and it has already traveled more than 1700 miles, proving that even after decades in captivity, nature can find its way back.



Dr. Laura Prodoscimi, a delegate of the IAC Scientific Committee from Argentina, is a member of the team of experts following Jorge's journey and reporting on his location in Brazil. But Jorge has not only been a scientific protagonist, he has also become a symbol of awareness. Thanks to the ASO - Tortugas network - composed of researchers, technicians and organizations from several countries, his story has been shared in Argentinean, Uruguayan and Brazilian media, serving as a tool to inform on threats facing sea turtles in the region.



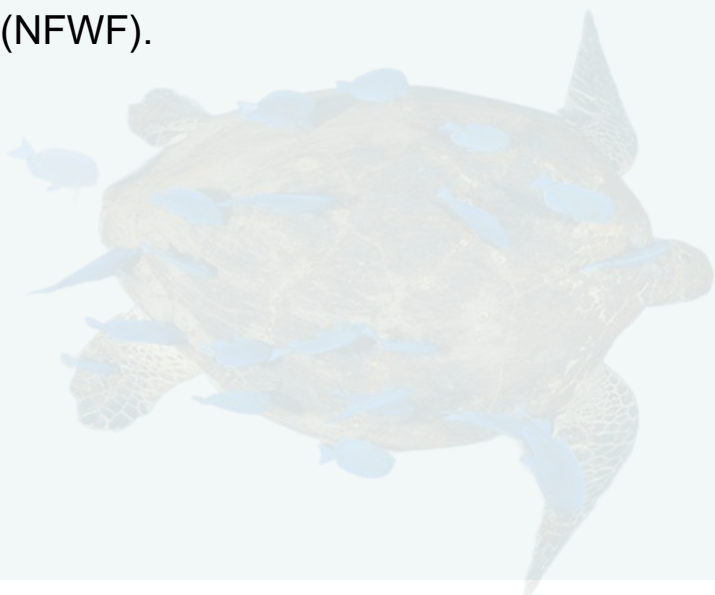
Jorge's case highlights not only the potential of rehabilitation actions when planned and executed in an interdisciplinary manner, but also the enormous communicative power that these animals have to generate empathy, knowledge and collective action in favor of marine conservation. Their satellite tracking will continue to provide key information on how an individual that has lived in captivity for decades can be reinserted into the wild, and what strategies are most effective in favoring their adaptation. These types of initiatives demonstrate that collaboration between institutions, sustained commitment and scientific outreach are powerful tools for protecting endangered species and their habitats. Jorge continues swimming, and with him, a message of hope and shared responsibility.

## Project to reduce leatherback sea turtle bycatch in the Colombian Pacific moves forward

By: Diego Amorocho, PhD-Member Expert Advisory Committee - IAC



Since September 2024, the CIMAD Foundation and JUSTSEA are jointly advancing a project to reduce leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), bycatch in feeding areas of the Colombian Pacific, with the support of the *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation* (NFWF).





The project is being developed in coordination with artisanal fishing communities in the areas of Guapi, Saija and Timbiquí (department of Cauca) in the south-central Pacific of Colombia, and includes the following lines of action:

- Participatory evaluation of bycatch through interviews, workshops and fishing tours.
- Training fishermen in safe release techniques and good practices on board.
- Scientific monitoring through on-board sampling and community stations.
- Environmental education and community awareness, with emphasis on the ecological importance of leatherback turtles.
- Policy dialogue with environmental and fisheries authorities to promote sustainable management guidelines.

This project is part of a regional strategy for the conservation of the Eastern Pacific population of leatherback turtles, one of the most endangered in the world, and is coordinated with the efforts of the IAC and partner organizations such as LaudOPO. The results are expected to contribute to strengthen adaptive management mechanisms and community participation in the protection of this emblematic species.

For more information, please write to [fundacimad@gmail.com](mailto:fundacimad@gmail.com)





# Ecuador and the IAC organize World Sea Turtle Day Celebration

June 16, 2025  
Webinar "Connecting with Sea Turtles".



Ecuador



Peru



Venezuela



Panama



Dominican Republic

World Sea Turtle Day, June 16, is a day used to honor and highlight the importance of sea turtles. Healthy oceans need sea turtles. Sea turtles are a "keystone species," meaning they are an important part of their environment and influence other species around them. If a keystone species is removed from a habitat, the natural order can be disrupted, which impacts other wildlife and fauna in different ways. Sea turtles show incredible perseverance and resilience. So, for all that they are and mean to the oceans and their balance, they deserve their own day dedicated to them.







To celebrate this date, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAE) of Ecuador and the IAC Secretariat organized a webinar entitled "Connecting with Sea Turtles". The event took place on June 16 and was broadcast on MAE's Facebook live platform to an audience of more than 100 people. The webinar was attended by 8 panelists from 5 countries in the IAC region: Ecuador, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela.



The event provided a space for reflection, learning and inspiration. The panelists, students,, park rangers,,teachers,,fisheries, observers, NGOs and members of coastal communities shared their experiences with sea turtle conservation, an effort that not only protects a species, but also strengthens the connection and coexistence between humans and nature. The panelists from five countries were a sample of what we can achieve together. From environmental education in schools, to monitoring and protecting nests on beaches, to rehabilitating sea turtles and training fishermen in best practices, every action is valuable and counts. The panelists' efforts generate impacts in their communities that transcend generations and serve as a call to action.



The activity was carried out in two blocks with the following theme: Block 1 -

Topics:

- Rehabilitation of sea turtles;
- Reduction of bycatch in artisanal fisheries and training for the fishing sector;
- Environmental education for the protection of ocean biodiversity;
- Nest monitoring by children and youth.

Panelists: Johnny Martínez, David Barturén, Caparazón de Niños, Lorena Castro and the 4th grade students of the Private Educational Institution "Nora Eliza".

Block 2 - Theme:

Sea turtle conservation with NGO partnerships, universities and the governments of Panama, Venezuela and Dominican Republic.

Panelists: Milixzia Botacio, Angélica Burgos y Maria Fernanda Capellán

Activity Moderators: Raúl Álvares, Eduardo Espinoza, Verónica Cáceres and Beatriz Ladines



# International Sea Turtle Day - The Tamar Project Celebration

June 16, 2025

By: Neca Marcovaldi - Director Fundação Projeto Tamar



Brazil

The Projeto Tamar Foundation has been working on the Brazilian coast since the 1980s, with the mission of promoting the recovery of sea turtle populations through research, conservation and social inclusion initiatives. It currently operates in eight Brazilian states and oversees more than 1100 km of beaches. Within this area, there are six open-air museums dedicated to sea turtles, located in Praia do Forte (Bahia), Aracaju (Sergipe), Fernando de Noronha (Pernambuco), Vitória (Espírito Santo), Ubatuba (São Paulo) and Florianópolis (Santa Catarina). These areas were designed to raise awareness about sea turtle conservation and reach out to the general public. Through guided tours, interactive activities and exhibitions, the museums are important tools for the preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems and receive more than 700,000 visitors a year.







To celebrate International Sea Turtle Day on June 16, a series of special events were organized at the Projeto Tamar Foundation's museums and research stations. In Bacia do Campos (Rio de Janeiro) and at all other research stations throughout the country, the Projeto Tamar Foundation held a series of exhibitions and talks with local communities and schools about the celebrations during International Sea Turtle Week. In Ubatuba and Praia do Forte, art workshops focused on marine conservation were held to involve children and adults, using art and culture as tools for environmental awareness. In Aracaju, a cultural performance was held with the Barco de Fogo de Estância, a traditional show recognized as part of Sergipe's cultural heritage.





For With the aim of increasing interaction with families, children participated in interactive sea turtle feeding sessions, assisting caretakers at the Florianópolis and Ubatuba museums. These hands-on experiences foster emotional connections and deepen visitors' environmental awareness.



Finally, the most impactful moments of the celebration were the release of rehabilitated sea turtles into the ocean in Aracaju, Praia do Forte, Vitória and Florianópolis, while hatchlings were released from emerged nests in Fernando de Noronha and Pipa (Rio Grande do Norte).



The combination of activities reached almost 2,500 members of the local community and tourists. These events are tools for conservation. conservation.





# Opening of the 2025 - 2026 Sea Turtle Season Guatemala - National Council of Protected Areas Southeast Regional Directorate

By: Licda. Airam López Roulet - CONAP Guatemala, member of IAC Scientific and Consultative Committee



During the opening of the 2025-2026 sea turtle season, the Southeast Regional Directorate, through Engineer Marlon Chilin, is coordinating various awareness activities aimed at different stakeholders, including: children, adolescents, parliamentarians, turtle park managers, tourists, among others.



To kick off the 2025-2026 nesting season, a workshop was held to address conservation issues, turtle hatchery conditioning, and upcoming training with a focus on sea turtle conservation, thus integrating the communities in the area to establish a work plan for the 2025-2026 nesting season, the communities of the area to establish a collaborative work and effective.



During the second week of July we had the opportunity to record the nesting of a leatherback turtle at El Griton Beach and relocating the eggs to the Tortugario El Banco. This was a great opportunity for the community to observe an individual of this species, since in recent years the arrival of these organisms has decreased. *Photographs DRSO-CONAP-Guatemala*





## Centro Tamar/ICMBio highlights the union of the Americas for conservation and the participation of Brazil

June 16, 2025

By: Sandra Xavier, Erik Allan and Joca Thomé - Communication Centro Tamar/ICMBio



Brazil

On World Sea Turtle Day, celebrated worldwide on June 16, highlights not only Brazil's progress, but also the international cooperation of the Americas to protect these iconic species. Six of the seven extant species of sea turtles are found in the region, and five of them frequent the Brazilian coast.



This approach can lead to conservation strategies through the creation of so-called "sanctuaries" in the form of Conservation Units (CUs), aimed at conserving an entire rich marine biodiversity, including sea turtles. In Brazil, the TAMAR/ICMBio Center, as the manager of public policies aimed Turtle Conservation Action Plan (PAN), with several actions to protect them, in partnership with dozens of institutions, including institutions and so on.





Conservation actions in Brazil, led by the TAMAR/ICMBio Center for over 40 years, have resulted in significant improvements in the threat status of several species. Brazil proudly participates in the Inter-American Convention for the Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC), expressing its opinion vehemently and strengthening diplomatic and scientific articulation for coordinated actions. Among the issues discussed were the sustainable consumption of eggs, monitoring of arrivals and threats such as bycatch, pollution and coastal development projects.



Researchers and environmental managers emphasize the importance of international information exchange, as in the Leatherback Working Group, to identify critical areas and propose strategies such as the creation of marine sanctuaries. In Brazil, more than 30 institutions are part of a protection network that monitors beaches and protects thousands of nests each year. The joint effort seeks to ensure the survival of sea turtles, which are essential to the balance of the oceans, benefiting not only the only to the species, but to the entire planet.



## **IAC Secretariat attends the 11th meeting of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (CACT) of the SPAW Protocol**

The 11th meeting of the CACT was held in Panama City from June 30 to July 3, 2025. Experts and delegates from across the Wider Caribbean region gathered to advance regional cooperation on the protection of Specially Protected Areas and wildlife under the Cartagena Convention. One of the areas of interest for the IAC was the revision of the Sargasso management plan for SPAW countries, a document developed by a working group of which the IAC is a member. The Kingdom of the Netherlands presented an Action Plan for the Recovery of the Northwest Atlantic Leatherback Turtle to the CACT, in which the IAC also participated. He highlighted that before the CACT two work plan activities for continued collaboration, offering support for SPAW's efforts to develop guidelines and forms for reporting sea turtle strandings and the possibility of establishing a sea turtle stranding network. The IAC has developed stranding data collection guidelines and forms that may be useful to SPAW.







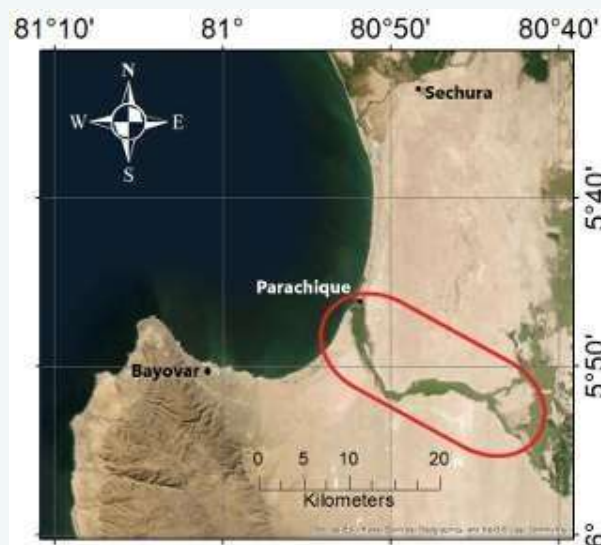
## Sea Turtle Monitoring in the Virrilá Estuary, Sechura, Piura, Peru

July 11, 2025

By: Javier Quiñónez, PhD- IMARPE- Delegate of the IAC Scientific Committee



From July 2nd to July 11th, 2025, the 30th Monitoring of Sea Turtles in the Virrilá Estuary was carried out. This is the only true estuary in the middle of the Sechura Bay, south of the department of zone Piura, at 05°50'S, transition between the warm equatorial zone and the cold zone of the Humboldt Current.



This monitoring was carried out by the Office of Top Predator Research of the Instituto del Mar del Peru and with the support of Imarpe's Paita Coastal Laboratory. In the first stage, dead stranded turtles on both sides of the estuary were evaluated in order to determine the species, possible cause of biometric death, degree of decomposition, geographic position, measurements and photo identification. Salinity samples were also taken to analyze the salinity gradient from the upper basin of the estuary to its mouth in the Bocana area to the inner part of the estuary more than 22 km inland. With the authorization of the Forestry and Wildlife Service (SERFOR), the second stage of the monitoring was carried out in the area of La Bocana. The second stage of monitoring was carried out with live turtles. live turtles.



The health status of the population, residence in the area, biometric measurements, growth, genetics through mitochondrial DNA analysis and trophic ecology were evaluated to determine their diet. Cloacal isopathology was also performed to determine viruses and bacteria. On the other hand, body condition was determined and epibionts were identified, as well as possible anthropogenic interactions such as collisions, fishing or pollution in the estuary. Finally, during the third stage, the relative abundance of sea turtles was analyzed using the counting technique through sightings in strategic zones in the study area from the Bocana de Parachique to the inner part of the estuary.





Some of the green turtle morphotypes found in the Virrila Estuary. The following morphotypes were identified: 1) Radiated morphotype with intense reddish/orange color with characteristics of populations from the Western Pacific. 2) Mottled morphotype, typical of populations from the Western Pacific. 2) Speckled morphotype, typical of the Virrila Estuary, 3) Typical black morphotype, typical of Galapagos and Michoacan and very common throughout Peru, 4) Dark brown radiated morphotype, typical of northern Peru. The morphotypes will be purchased with the mitochondrial DNA analysis that is being carried out in the genetics laboratory of Imarpe to see their genetic origin, and a publication in a scientific journal indexed Q1 and a thesis with the National University of San Marcos of the Faculty of Genetics and Biotechnology will be carried out.





## Environment and allied organizations formalize creation of the National Sea Turtle Network - Dominican Republic

June 25, 2025



With the purpose of strengthening sea turtle conservation in the country, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and partner organizations signed the Memorandum of Understanding that formally establishes the National Sea Turtle Network, an initiative that seeks to coordinate inter-institutional efforts and promote joint actions in favor of these endangered species. The Regulations for Lighting in Sea Turtle Nesting Areas, which establish technical and environmental parameters for tourist, industrial, residential and commercial infrastructures located in coastal nesting areas, were also socialized in order to prevent, mitigate and control the negative impacts on sea turtles and their habitats. The act was headed by the Vice Minister of Coastal and Marine Resources, José Ramón Reyes, who explained that "sea turtles face multiple threats throughout their life cycle, which include the loss and alteration of critical habitats (such as nesting beaches), light pollution, incidental fishing, marine pollution and climate change".



He emphasized that "these threats, combined with their slow reproductive development, place several species in danger of extinction, a situation that requires urgent, coordinated and sustained responses". Vice Minister Reyes described the initiative as a valuable conservation effort and, referring to the Regulation on Lighting in Nesting Zones, said that this instrument constitutes a regulatory advance of enormous relevance. The activity was attended by the vice-president of the Punta Cana Group Foundation, Jake Kheel, as well as the legal director of the Piñero Group of the EcoBahía Foundation, Evelyn Khoury. Also present were representatives of the Dominican Foundation for Marine Studies (FUNDEMAR) and the legal director of Andreina Alamos Travel, Renato Lenzi. The Dominican Republic is home to four species of sea turtles, all facing multiple threats, especially during their nesting stage. Exposure to artificial light on beaches can disorient both females emerging from the sea to nest and hatchlings as they leave their nests, drastically reducing their chances of survival. The signing of this document reaffirms the Ministry of the Environment's commitment to the conservation of marine species, through various regulatory and strategic actions.

News taken from the Official Website of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources: <https://ambiente.gob.do/>







# Publication of Sea Turtle Nesting Sanctuary Management Programs

By: National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)



Mexico is considered the country of sea turtles, due to the diversity of species that nest on its coasts, both in the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Six of the seven species that live in the world (*Chelonia mydas*, *Lepidochelys kempii*, *Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Caretta caretta*, *Eretmochelys imbricata* and *Dermochelys coriácea*) find Mexican beaches ideal environments for their growth, development, feeding and reproduction. For this reason, nesting beaches in Mexico are of utmost importance, as some of them are among the most abundant in the world. Government efforts to protect sea turtles began in the 1960s. In 1986, the first decree was issued establishing 16 beaches as reserve zones and refuge sites for their protection and conservation. Subsequently, in 2002, these zones were declared Natural Protected Areas (NPA) under the category of sanctuaries. In 2022, this decree was modified to add a new sanctuary, which represented a significant advance for the implementation of their respective Management Programs. Between 2023 and 2024, eight new sanctuaries were decreed, bringing the total to 25 protected areas, all administered by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP). These 25 areas total 7,522.74 hectares distributed along both of Mexico's coasts.





The Management Program is a NPA's guiding instrument that defines planning, regulation, and establishes activities, actions, and essential guidelines for its operation. Having this instrument strengthens sanctuary management in the face of the diverse challenges they face. The elaboration and publication of these programs is a participatory process that involves local communities, municipal and federal governments, academia, civil organizations, and other stakeholders. Between July 31, 2024 and July 4, 2025, the Management Programs for 13 sanctuaries were published and another 12 are in process.



Thanks to the coordinated efforts of CONANP staff, civil associations, volunteers, and members of local communities, all aligned under common objectives established in the Management Programs, during the 2024-2025 nesting season, significant progress was made in the protection of leatherback turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*) in the Barra de la Cruz-Playa Grande Sanctuary, Oaxaca. During this period, a total of 227 nests were protected, and 8,451 hatchlings were successfully released into the sea, achieving a protection rate of 93%.



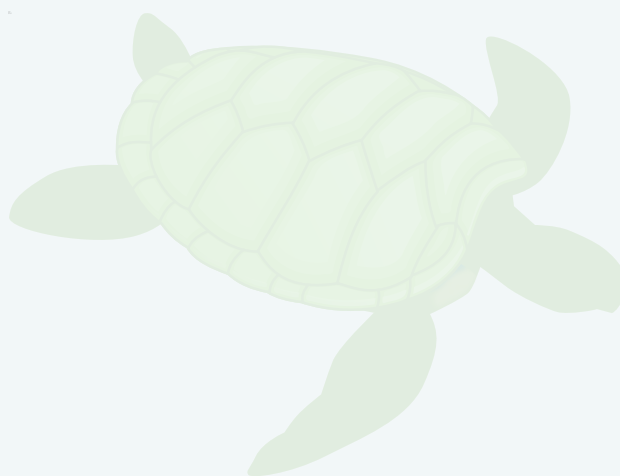
## MiAmbiente launches 2025 national campaign for the protection of sea turtles

July 19, 2025



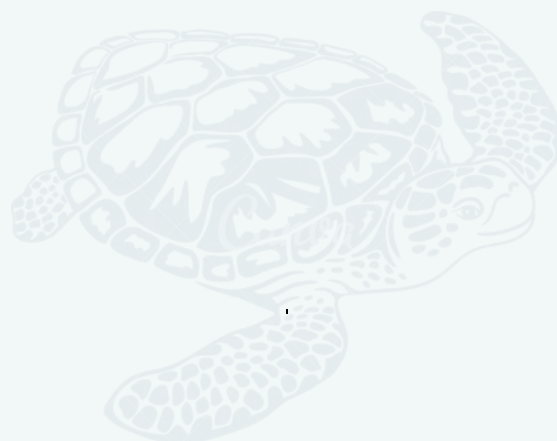
Panama

The Ministry of Environment (MiAmbiente) today launched its national campaign for the protection and conservation of sea turtles for the 2025 nesting season of these globally threatened species. The months of July to December are key for the conservation of these species, whose presence is a sign of the good condition of marine-coastal ecosystems. The launching of the campaign was symbolically carried out together with the Tortubanks organization, on the beaches of Punta Chame, with the rehabilitation of the turtle nursery that they manage in the community of Chame, in the province of West Panama. The Ministry of Environment participated in this event by providing technical and logistical support to community conservation actions. Panama is home to 5 of the 7 species of sea turtles that exist on planet Earth, which are found both on our Caribbean coasts and on the Pacific coast of the isthmus. During the event, the Ministry of the Environment's Sea Turtle Work Plan 2025 was also presented, developed through the project Strengthening actions for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of sea turtles in coastal communities on the Pacific and Caribbean coasts of Panama.





The plan aims to conserve these species through immediate strategic measures organized into six main areas, including beach characterization, night patrols and monitoring, nest protection, threat elimination, beach cleanups, environmental education, technical training, and rehabilitation. The plan includes interventions in priority Pacific beaches such as Isla Cañas, La Marinera, Playa Venao, Cambutal and Playa La Barqueta. Similarly, work will be carried out in the Caribbean at key nesting sites such as Soroopta, San San Pond San, Bastimentos (in Bocas del Toro) and Armila (Guna Yala). The conservation and protection actions are aimed at generating useful information for decision-making, reducing risks in nesting areas, raising community awareness, and increasing local response capacity in the face of environmental threats. For the Minister of Environment, Juan Carlos Navarro, this plan means a joint effort to address the main threats facing sea turtles in Panama. "This work integrates different sectors in a common approach, based on scientific information, environmental education and direct action in the field. Our goal is clear: to protect these species and conserve the ecosystems where they thrive," said the minister. During the day at the Tortubanks nursery, tasks such as cleaning the land, sand casting and gridding the space where the eggs are laid were carried out. An inspection of active nests was also carried out, confirming the arrival of Olive Ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), one of the smallest turtles in the world. one of the smallest in the world.







This hatchery provides protection for the eggs from risks such as erosion caused by storm surges, predation by coyotes or dogs, and unauthorized removal. "From the 2023 and 2024 season, more than 10,000 eggs have been collected at the Tortubanks hatchery, of which approximately 9,000 hatchlings have been released to the sea," explained Milixza Botacio, a biologist with the organization. "We have recorded Olive Ridley and Hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), the latter of which is critically endangered. Their presence on these beaches is valuable, as not all Pacific beaches report nesting," she added.



The minister also pointed out that these actions are part of the national government's effort to bring order to the country and combat the "environmental anarchy" caused by decades of institutional neglect. "We will be unyielding against those who violate environmental regulations and put the health of our ecosystems at risk. I invite all Panamanians to please help us take care of nature and report environmental crimes in @miambientepma." The Ministry of Environment will continue to accompany Tortubanks as part of its commitments and responsibilities for conservation and technical monitoring in the field.

<https://miambiente.gob.pa/miambiente-lanza-campana-nacional-2025-para-la-proteccion-de-las-tortugas-marinas/>



# Day after day, this is how the Federal Attorney General's Office for Environmental Protection works to protect sea turtles.

By: **Jesús Mejía Meza, Profepa**



In Mexico, sea turtle populations have historically faced critical levels of survival due to various threats, including: looting and illegal trade of eggs, meat and by-products; unplanned tourism activities; incidental capture in coastal and pelagic fisheries; pollution of seas and coasts; and destruction of their nesting habitat.



These threats affect the 6 species of sea turtles recorded in Mexico, of which there are in the planet: "olive ridley turtle" (*Lepidochelys olivacea*); "olive ridley turtle" (*Lepidochelys kempii*); "Atlantic green or white turtle" (*Chelonia mydas*) and its synonym "Pacific green or black turtle" (*Chelonia agassizi*); "loggerhead turtle" (*Caretta caretta*); "hawksbill turtle" (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), all of them listed in the risk category "In danger of extinction" by NOM-059- SEMARNAT-2010 and included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora Flora and Fauna (CITES).



Since 1992, with the creation of the Federal Attorney's Office for Environmental Protection (Profepa), the federal government has established legal and technical mechanisms to protect, conserve and promote the recovery of sea turtles, strengthening inter-institutional coordination at the three levels of government and with strategic allies from the fishing sector, academia and civil society. During 2024, 15 surveillance actions were carried out at nesting sites, in addition to those carried out at turtle camps, in coordination with federal, state and municipal authorities and volunteers organized in Participative Environmental Surveillance Committees.



In attention to the sea turtle arribada zones in the Escobilla and Morro Ayuta Sanctuaries, in Oaxaca, during the year 2024, 585 surveillance patrols were carried out, through which 17 arribadas were protected, in which we protected approximately 1'302,587 nests; in addition, we recovered 49,700 eggs that were intended to be plundered. In the same year, in coordination with federal authorities, we carried out 30 operations to prevent illegal trafficking of nests, 30 operations to prevent illegal trafficking of sea turtle specimens, products and by-products, at highway points in the states of Guerrero, Baja California Sur, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Tamaulipas and Yucatán.





Regarding the operation of turtle camps, in 2024 Profepa carried out inspections of 18 turtle camps and executed 12 surveillance tours in the states of Baja California Sur, Guerrero, Chiapas and Veracruz, to verify compliance with NOM- 162-SEMARNAT-2012.



Profepa also joined the efforts to address the problem at San Lazaro Beach, Ulloa Bay, BCS, where it participated in the research cruise called: "Monitoring of Oceanographic Conditions to Determine the Health of Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) Habitat in the Gulf of Ulloa", in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources with the Californian Turtle Group





Profepa also verifies compliance with NOM-061-SAG- PESC/SEMARNAT-2016, regarding the certification of shrimp vessels that correctly install and use turtle excluder devices in their fishing activities. In 2024, more than 560 vessels were certified and, so far in 2025, it has certified 15 shrimp vessels in the states of Campeche and Tamaulipas. Another important action in which Profepa collaborates is the National Strategy for Cleaning and Conservation of beaches and coasts, an urgent and necessary intervention, given that between 60 and 90% of the waste found on beaches are plastics and microplastics that represent a mortal threat to turtles, which frequently confuse the bags with jellyfish, one of their main foods, causing intestinal obstructions that put the turtles at risk. The goal of eliminating plastic waste from 100% of Mexican beaches by 2030, with gradual increases from 10% to 30% by 2025-2026, will create safe nesting corridors for turtles. Clean beaches facilitate female turtles' access to optimal nesting sites and reduce physical obstacles that can divert hatchlings from their instinctive route to the ocean. Finally, it is important to say that Profepa is working on the development of campaigns aimed at citizens to invite them not to be part of the sea turtle egg trafficking chain.

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# Commemoration of Sea Turtle Day in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the States of Aragua, La Guaira, Zulia, Sucre, and Nueva Esparta

**By: Directorate General of Biological Diversity, Ministry of Popular Power for Ecosocialism-Vice Ministry for the Preservation of Life and Biodiversity**



Venezuela

Within the framework of Sea Turtle Day 2025, activities were carried out in several regions of the country. We hope that this information will contribute to highlight the efforts and advances in the protection of our sea turtles, in addition to raising awareness and strengthening the commitment to their conservation.



On the beautiful coast of Aragua, the communities of Choroní, Cuyagua, and Chuao are leading a vital effort to protect our precious sea turtles. These incredible creatures, essential to the health of our marine ecosystem and protected by Venezuelan law, face serious threats. The degradation and pollution of their habitat, poaching for the consumption of their meat and eggs, and the illegal trafficking of their shells and tortoiseshell—often seen as status symbols—are constant dangers.



The reproductive season, which extends from May to August, is a particularly vulnerable period for them. In the upcoming nesting season, plans include technical training for all "tortugueros" and providing tools such as red light flashlights, nitrile gloves and registration forms.



In the state of La Guaira, a training circuit focused on education and environmental awareness was carried out. The activity was organized by the Ministry of Ecosocialism and UTEC La Guaira, with the participation of institutions, organizations and the local community. The event included tours of sea turtle nests, talks on their biology and conservation, theoretical surfing classes, bird watching and local fauna, as well as topics on environmental sanitation and the importance of wetlands. The Akupara Project was presented at Pui Pui Beach and educational materials prepared by students were handed out. Representatives from various schools, universities, law enforcement agencies and community organizations participated, demonstrating broad inter-institutional collaboration. The event strengthened environmental awareness and laid the groundwork for future conservation and nursery management actions. nursery management.



In the framework of World Sea Turtle Day, the Gulf of Venezuela Sea Turtle Working Group led a day of environmental awareness and direct action in La Marina Park, Lake Maracaibo. The activity focused on the threat of plastic to sea turtles, a species that uses this area as a habitat for their development. The actions included the collection and classification of plastic waste, with a total of 972.5 kg of waste collected (143 bags of 200 liters) by 79 volunteers. Part of the material was delivered to El Zulia Recicla to be transformed into school furniture and ecoblocks, promoting the circular economy; the rest was removed by government agencies.



Students from the University of Zulia, scout groups, NGOs such as Biciola, MANGLE, Greenheart, among others, participated, showing a solid articulation between civil society, academia and the public sector for marine conservation.





An educational workshop focused on the conservation of sea turtles, millenary creatures that symbolize marine life and biodiversity, was held in the state of Sucre, on the Morro de Puerto Santo beach. High school students participated actively, reflecting on the importance of protecting these endangered species and experiencing a special moment with the release of baby turtles into the sea. The day promoted environmental awareness and the commitment of young people to nature, strengthening the link between education and ecological action. The release of the hatchlings was a symbol of hope and a call to preserve biodiversity, highlighting that protecting sea turtles is protecting life itself.



In Nueva Esparta, videos have been produced documenting the efforts and results of these activities to raise awareness of the fieldwork and mobilize more local allies. We carried out the Knowledge Challenge Knowledge Challenge, through the generation of questions, the knowledge acquired by the children, they were also given posters and turtles to assemble. On the part of the Training Unit, we had the participation of the Preventive Front, volunteers from the Parguito sea turtle working group, the State Ecotourism group, CDCENE officials, and teachers.



The children shared their knowledge of the topic and the educational work that has been carried out in these communities by MINEC in El Tirano, Cardón, Playa Parguito and Playa El Agua. Through the National Sea Turtle Conservation Program carried out by MINEC with the Biodiversity Unit. The combined initiatives - video and workshops - have generated: 30% increase in volunteer requests for night watches, strengthened links with educational institutions and community leaders, interest of communities with low nesting rates to form work groups. Challenges: logistical limitations for evening sessions and need for printed materials.



Ecological Talk "Sea Turtle Conservation, Zero Plastic Campaign" in person at the Complejo Educativo Bolivariano Dr. Luis Ortega in Paraguachi. Monitoring techniques and moments of release of hatchlings to the sea, highlighting the emotional and educational impact.



You can access the Convention's bulletins through this link:

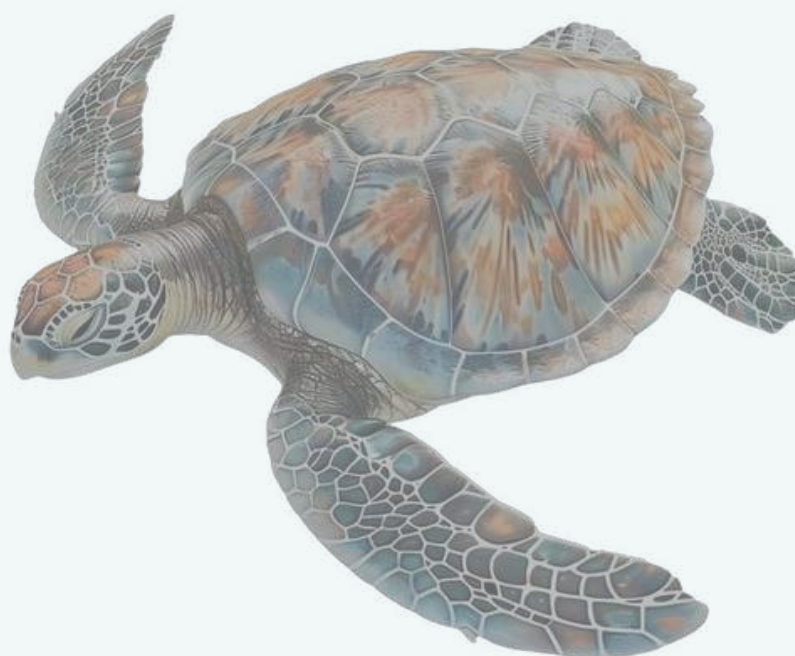
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